

## The Skeleton

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The people lived in a spectacular setting, in a land where skyscrapers and luxurious shopping centres mingled with palm trees and flowers, set on the fringes of sandy beaches, warm seas and chilly economic realities.

One day, the people were taking an unpaid holiday on the beach when a stranger appeared. He was tall, pale, solid, and had a shock of fair hair. The people were astonished at the appearance of this young man, who threw himself upon them and demanded their love.

He saw them draw back from him and said, "I want only to be accepted. Let me stay here and be part of you. I need to be truly integrated."

He was asking for something they could not give. But they cordially invited him to remain with them on the beach. It was not enough for him. He jumped up and tore off his skin, throwing it aside like an old track-suit.

"At least you cannot say my skin is a different colour from yours."

They looked with astonishment at this man of scarlet, inviting him again to stay with them beneath the palms.

But he could not feel himself properly accepted. This time he wrenched away all his flesh, until only his gleaming white skeleton was left.

"Now you see that I have given all I have to be accepted by you."

And he danced before them so that his bones rattled.

At this the people were very surprised, and ran off to swim in the warm sea. When they returned the skeleton was still there. Again they made him welcome.

"But you still do not accept me as one of yourselves," the skeleton cried.

So they used him in their wayang as a figure of death. And then he was truly integrated with them.

He even became a small commercial success.

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